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ABSTRACT

This study used data from the Midwest Colleges Study to examine the personal characteristics and environmental features that affect the development of college students' attitudes toward diversity and race-based politics. Specifically, it evaluated how college students' demographic characteristics, precollege backgrounds, perceptions of discrimination, and college environment differentially affected these attitudes. Astin's Input-Environment-Output impact model was used as the study's framework. The study found that a few personal characteristics (parent educational level, gender, and attending a white high school) influenced student attitudes. However, environmental factors appeared to influence students attitudes to a greater extent. Students most supportive of diversity included black students who were involved on campus, white students who were members of organizations concerned with black issues, white students who lived on campus, and white students who did not have mostly white friends. In contrast, white students not involved on campus were most opposed to race-based policies such as affirmative action. Students, both black and white, who took a black studies course tended to be supportive of diversity. (Contains 41 references.) (DB)

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College Student Attitudes toward Diversity and Race-Based Policies

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College Student Attitudes Toward Diversity and Race-Based Policies

Paper for the Annual Meeting of the
Association for the Study of Higher Education
Miami, Florida
November 1998

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Introduction

Seen as a public good, higher education has been charged with many responsibilities, including the development of critical thinkers, the shaping of students' attitudes and values, and the cultivation of change agents and responsible citizens who can find solutions to problems for the betterment of our nation and world (Clothier, 1978; Melodia & Blake, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). One of the ways higher education has sought to propel students toward a greater good has been to diversify our college campuses, and affirmative action programs have helped in higher education's pursuit of diversity. However, institutions of higher education have been forced into the spotlight in regard to their affirmative action programs and practices, especially in their admissions policies and financial aid considerations. In several states, federal courts have handed down decisions and citizens have voted to abolish affirmative action programs and policies that serve to provide equal opportunity for employment and education to all individuals. "Although [these] attacks on affirmative action have been spearheaded primarily by political conservatives, affirmative action in college admissions is in fact opposed by men and women from a diversity of ethnicities/races, social classes, and political ideologies" (Sax & Arredondo, 1998, p. 1).

Sax and Arredondo (1996) examined the affirmative action attitudes of 204,103 college freshmen from 473 colleges and universities in the United States and found that first year college students may not clearly understand what affirmative action is or what it is intended to do. Moreover, predictions about the effects of dismantling affirmative action include the following: (1) higher education admissions for African Americans could drop 40% to 50%, and for Latinos admissions could fall 5% to 15%; (2) financial aid targeting underrepresented groups would cease to exist and make it difficult for these groups to attend college; (3) employers and universities would no longer be obligated to meet standards of equal opportunity; (4) because prejudices still exist in our society, underrepresented groups will again find it difficult to compete in education and employment; and (5) we will ultimately see less diversity in the workplace and in universities (Cantu, 1996).

Reality is proving to be worse than the predictions concerning the dismantling of affirmative action in higher education admissions. In a March 31, 1998 news release, the

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University of California, Berkeley announced a record number of applicants (29,961) for fall 1998, but with a 54.7% drop in admittance of underrepresented minorities from 1997. Specifically, African American admissions dropped 64.3%, from 562 African Americans admitted in 1997 to 191 being offered admissions for fall 1998. Chicano/Latino students did not fare much better with a 56.3% decline. Last year, 1045 Chicano/Latino students were admitted to Berkeley compared to 434 for this coming year. The number of American Indians admitted decreased 58.9%. In 1997, 69 American Indians were admitted, whereas only 27 American Indian students were offered admissions for fall 1998, representing 0.3% of the total students admitted (Mena & Relf, 1998).

The University of California, Los Angeles also reported a record number of applicants (32,608) for fall 1998 and expects to enroll about 3850. However, there was a 35.8% decrease in the number of applicants who identified themselves as African American, Chicano/Latino, or American Indian - a drop from 2066 in fall 1997 to 739 for fall 1998. In terms of those admitted, there was a 42.6% decrease in the number of African Americans admitted to UCLA for fall 1998 (290 admitted) compared to fall 1997 (488 admitted). Chicano/Latino student admittance fell 33%. Last year 1497 Chicano/Latino applicants were accepted, whereas 1001 were accepted for this year. American Indian admissions declined 43% with only 46 admitted for fall 1998, compared to 81 in 1997 (de Cardenas, 1998).

These numbers are staggering and represent what institutions of higher education will look like if affirmative action policies are dismantled. The predictions seemed horrific, until reality proved to be more devastating.

With the assumption that some college students will be future policy makers, political leaders, and active voters, it is important to study the influences on the development of student attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies. Astin's (1973) input-environment-outcome (I-E-O) model assesses the impact of different college experiences on students' development. This conceptual framework guides the present study. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the following research questions: (1) What personal characteristics and environmental features affect the development of college students' attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies? (2) More specifically, how do college students' demographic characteristics, pre-college backgrounds, perceptions of discrimination, and college environment differentially affect these attitudes? and (3) What are the different influences, if any, in the development of attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies among White and Black[1] students based on these constructs?

Theories and Previous Research

The Context of Diversity in Higher Education

The term "diversity" has many connotations. Loden and Rosener (1991) proposed six primary dimensions of diversity - differences that are innate and/or have an important impact throughout one's life. These six dimensions include age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, and sexual orientation (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Within the context of higher education, the understanding of diversity has changed over the past thirty years. As a result of several events including the Black Civil Rights movement and passage of the Civil Rights Act in the sixties, the large numbers of women entering higher education in the seventies, open recruitment of older students in the eighties, and new racial and ethnic student populations appearing on university campuses in the eighties and nineties, "higher education [initially] defined diversity as...adding underrepresented groups to what already existed" (Musil, 1996, p. 225). However, higher education's "understanding of what it means to diversify has matured. It has grown more complex as we come to understand that it is not just about adding to what is, but [it is] about transforming the relations between the parts and in the process reconceiving the whole" (Musil, 1996, p. 224).

Alger (1997) proposes that the reason why the affirmative consideration of race to achieve diversity in higher education has fallen into legal and social disrepute is because "diversity has become an end in itself, rather than a means to a greater educational end" (p. 21). Other researchers support Alger's supposition with empirical studies that show intergroup contact alone does not facilitate tolerance, understanding, or acceptance among diverse individuals (Hewstone &

[1] The term 'Black' refers to students who identified themselves as "Black/African American" or "Black Other" on the survey used for this study. When "African American" is used, it refers to individuals within the context of the study being referenced.

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Brown, 1996; Hurtado & Dey, 1997). Melendez and Blake (1993) emphasize that true education should validate human experience and provide a "framework for the educational experience that will support the understanding that the existence of multiple cultures and identities within the human community do not automatically lead to a sense of community, cooperation, growth and development" (p. 3). We can succeed at creating diverse campuses on the surface but fail to affirm diversity. It is important to plan and implement programs that encourage and promote increased respect and understanding of differences, greater commitment to social justice, and improved academic success and cognitive development, but these educational objectives are not easily accomplished without diversity in our student populations (Melendez & Blake, 1993; Springer, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Nora, 1995).

Pre-college Background and College Environment Influences on Student Attitudes

Antony (1997) and Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Nora (1996) found that attitudes prior to matriculation affected students' motivation to participate in different activities that promote racial understanding. Students who were less open to diversity issues were less likely to participate in racial or cultural awareness workshops and were more likely to believe racial understanding is not important. Although one's predisposition toward diversity seems to influence one's attitudes toward those perceived as different, studies have shown that the impact of college is more important than what the student brings to college (Antony, 1997). "Face-to-face interaction in institutions of higher education can play a key role in developing genuine interracial understanding and tolerance to overcome past racial and ethnic tensions" (Alger, 1997, p. 23). Studies have shown that having diversity on campus promotes cross-race interactions, which have positive effects on their personal and academic development of all students, regardless of race or ethnicity (Astin, 1997). Researchers have found that having a non-discriminating racial environment at the institution they are attending, living on-campus, participation in a racial or cultural workshop, enrolling in an ethnic studies course, having frequent discussions about issues of race and diversity, and the extent of involvement with diverse student peers are variables that have significant positive effects on students' openness to diversity, whereas Greek affiliation has a

significant negative effect on openness to diversity (Milem, 1994; Pascarella, Whitt, Nora, Edison, & Hagedorn, 1995; Springer, et al., 1995). Pascarella, et al. (1995) suggest that a non-discriminatory environment can be developed "through policies and programs that teach faculty, staff, and students about what constitutes racial discrimination and demonstrate unequivocally that racism and intolerance for diversity are anathema to the institution ethos and mission" (p. 14). Springer, et al. (1995) found that the undergraduate racial mix at an institution was an important factor in developing relationships with diverse peers. "White students who attended institutions with fewer minority students made fewer friends of other races during their first year of college, indicating that attitude toward diversity and opportunity for interracial contact both had significant effects on interracial friendships" (Springer, et al., 1995, p. 14).

Peer Group and Intergroup Contact

Astin (1993) asserts that students' peer groups influence their growth and development during the undergraduate years. "Knowledge of the importance of peer influence on student learning can influence a broad range of institutional policies and practices...intended to bring White students into more frequent and educationally purposeful contact with racially-, ethnically-, and culturally-diverse peers" (Pascarella, et al., 1995, p. 14). The amount, extent, and type of involvement with student peers, who are diverse or who are homogeneous in the case of Greek affiliation, can affect one's openness to diversity.

It is important for institutions to provide a variety of settings in and out of the classroom where interactions with diverse individuals and discussions about racial and ethnic issues can occur. Researchers on intergroup contact suggest that individuals generate affective ties and more favorable attitudes toward those whom they perceive to be different when face-to-face interaction occurs (Cook, 1984; Pascarella et al., 1995; Pettigrew, 1986). Moreover, Allport (as cited in Milem, 1994) suggests that different types of contact will have different effects on the maintenance or reduction of prejudice. Casual contact may reinforce prejudice, especially in situations where a high number of minority groups exist. Acquaintance contact may lessen prejudice, where contact generates knowledge and understanding. Residential contact, if different individuals live with one

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another, will likely lessen prejudice; whereas residential contact that is anticipatory, may increase prejudice beliefs. Finally, occupational contact of equal status or higher status by a minority individual, would tend to lessen prejudice; whereas differential occupational status would reinforce prejudice.

It would be difficult for students holding stereotypes of certain groups to retain their beliefs if they meet individuals of a group who differ from their stereotypes. Antony (1993) and Pascarella, et al. (1995) found that students who have the opportunity to discuss racial and ethnic issues during college change positively in regard to the importance they place on promoting racial understanding. Other studies show that more favorable racial attitudes or self-reported gains in racial awareness are associated with discussing racial or ethnic issues and socializing with individuals from different racial or ethnic groups (Astin, 1993; Hurtado, 1992; Hyun, 1994; Milem, 1994). Such openness to diversity can give rise to the affirmation of diversity and ultimately the inclusion of all individuals in the campus environment.

Prejudice and Racism

Another factor that influences one's attitude toward race-based policies is prejudice (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). As defined by Allport (1954), negative "[e]thnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he [or she] is a member of that group" (p. 9). Antony (1993) found that African American students perceive a greater need for improving racial understanding than White students, and as African American students progress through college, they believe it becomes more essential to improve race relations, whereas White students who have not participated in activities that promote diversity believe racial understanding becomes less important. Pascarella, et al. (1995) also found that White students perceived significantly less campus prejudice against ethnic minority students than students of color.

Closely related to prejudice is racism, which "is a developed set of attitudes that include antagonism based on the supposed superiority of one group or on the supposed inferiority of another group, premised solely on skin color or race" (Berwick as cited in Scott, 1996, p. 3).

Wilson (1995) proposes that "it is racism, not affirmative action, that stigmatizes minorities" (p. 90) and the elimination of affirmative action without rooting out the racist beliefs will exacerbate injustices and discrimination that minorities face every day. He gives an example of a White student's reaction in seeing a Black student on campus. The White student says that his first thought is "Affirmative Action," not maybe that this person is smart, but instead that "they don't even belong here." And the Black student feels like he has "Affirmative Action" stamped on his forehead. Wilson (1995) says "the question for Black students is not 'Do you want to be stigmatized?' The question is 'Do you want to be a student with 'Affirmative Action' stamped on your forehead, or would you rather be excluded from [higher education] and still have 'Black' stamped on your forehead?'" (p. 92).

Perceptions of Discrimination

Canta (1996) suggests that the origins of affirmative action are intricately linked with racial discrimination in the United States. The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines discrimination as "the act of making a distinction, giving unfair treatment especially because of prejudice." Differences in perceptions of discrimination may affect the ways in which individuals view affirmative action or other race-based policies. Sigelman and Welch (1991) report "that only one White person in ten believes that African Americans encounter discrimination in getting skilled jobs or fair wages, and that the odds are little better than fifty-fifty that a White person can think of even one type of discrimination that African Americans in their area suffer. In contrast, about 60% of African Americans reported experiencing discrimination in at least one of four domains: getting an education, obtaining housing, getting a job, or receiving equal wages. Furthermore, most African American respondents perceived increased racism among Whites from 1986 to 1989, while most Whites perceived that White racism was constant or lessening" (p. 2).

In a study by the Urban Institute (as cited by Canta, 1996) investigators found repeated discrimination in employment practices based on race. White applicants were offered jobs three times more than were equally qualified African American applicants. They also found that the higher the position, the greater the discrimination. Some opponents of race-based policies say that

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socio-economic status should be considered instead of race in admissions and considerations for financial aid. But a study by Fish (as cited in Cantu, 1996) showed that one's race, not socio-economic status dictated how two individuals of identical educational attainment and social background, i.e. both were well educated and affluent, were treated differently based on their skin color. In every interaction, the African American male was either ignored or looked on suspiciously. He was asked to pay more for the same goods, e.g. down payment for a car, and he was turned away as a prospective tenant while the White male was offered additional amenities. The African American male was made to feel inferior and unwanted in every situation, even by other African Americans. This man, with a college degree and other social advantages, was still subjected to racial discrimination. In addition, studies have shown that consideration of socio-economic status without race is not adequate to ensure racial diversity on our college campuses (Alger, 1997).

Self Interest

In addition to differences in perceptions of discrimination, self-interest has been shown to influence the way individuals view race-based policies (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). Individual self-interest is the principle that if something will not benefit a person or that it will impose a cost to him or her, then he or she will not support it. Researchers have found that Whites with greater levels of education and higher incomes are more likely to oppose affirmative action and other race-based policies, because they are more likely to be negatively affected by it (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Constantino & King, 1985; and Jacobson, 1985a). Jacobson (1985b) also looked at group self-interest and found that African Americans with higher levels of education still supported affirmative action practices. This finding supports Bobo and Kluegel's (1993) research on group self-interest that suggests protected groups under affirmative action would tend to be more supportive than Whites of race-based policies.

Importance of this Study

Affirmative action policies have helped to diversify our college campuses and to create opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities and women. It is imperative that institutions of higher education provide empirical evidence of the educational value and impact that racial diversity has on college students, both during their college years and after they have graduated, if affirmative action is to be utilized in admissions policies and financial aid considerations in the future. Hence, it is important that we understand what influences the development of college students' attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies.

Conceptual Framework

Astin's (1973) input-environment-outcome (I-E-O) college impact model is the framework that is used in this study. In utilizing this model, the effects of student input characteristics can be controlled, and the effects of the college environment can be isolated. Thus, the independent effects of both the student inputs and college environment on the outcome measure can be determined.

Input	Environment	Outcome
Demographic characteristics: gender, race, age, parent educational level	College ability measures: college GPA, self-rated academic ability	Attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies
Pre-college background: high school GPA, racial composition of neighborhood and high school	Perceived climate of institution: institution is supportive of race issues, feel discrimination on campus, perceive conflict between Blacks and Whites, interaction between groups, preference for asking for help	
	College experiences: interaction with students of different race, have friends of different race, involvement on campus, live on campus, enroll in Black studies course, participation in student organizations for minority students	

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Methods

Data Sources and Data Collection[1]

The data used in this analysis are part of the *Midwest Colleges Study*, a cross-sectional study of the institutional and organizational factors related to the success of Black students at predominantly White four-year institutions (Allen, Gurin & Peterson, 1988). Funded by the Spencer Foundation, the larger study involved intensive case studies at six predominantly White four-year colleges and universities. Located in three Upper Midwestern states (Michigan, Illinois and Ohio), institutions were selected in order to reflect the diversity of predominantly White institutions in which Black students find themselves. Thus, the institutions vary in undergraduate enrollment, control, type, location, and selectivity. The institutions were also selected according to their ability to sustain Black enrollments over a ten-year period, 1976-1986. At the time of the study, the Black student enrollments ranged from 7% to 20% on the selected campuses. Anonymity was promised to all institutions and respondents.

The *Midwest Colleges Study* is based on a mail questionnaire of students at the six institutions. Although many of the institutions' minority student bodies include Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, the *Midwest Colleges Study* was limited to a study of White and Black students. The data reported in this study represent the responses of over 2,000 White and Black college students. Administered during the 1990-91 academic year, 2934 White students and 2841 Black students were mailed a 62 item or 66-item questionnaire, respectively. Resulting in 41.3% White student and 31.5% Black student response rates, this secondary analysis includes the responses of 1212 White and 895 Black undergraduate students.

White students were randomly selected from lists of currently enrolled students provided by the Registrars at each of the institutions. The number of White students selected did not exceed 600 on any one campus. The Black students were randomly selected form the lists of currently enrolled students, unless there were fewer than 300 Black students on the campus. When fewer than 300 Black students were on campus, all of the Black students were included in the sample.

[1] The information regarding data sources and data collection were obtained from Gilliard's (1996) dissertation.

Follow-up procedures included telephone calls to students who did not respond to the mailing. This process greatly increased the overall student response rates.

The questionnaire, *Diversity in the College Community*, was designed to collect students' perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and opinions about the college they were attending. The questionnaire is divided into five parts. The first part collects basic demographic information and information about students' current academic performance. Section two is devoted to students' academic and social experiences during college. Section three focuses on students' academic background (pre-college) and their academic plans and/or aspirations. Section four asks students to share their perceptions about their institution's racial environment and the relationships between White and Black students, faculty, and administrators (i.e. racial climate). The fifth and final section is devoted to students' attitudes and opinions about life in general and their perceptions of Blacks in relation to society as a whole.

Data Analysis

Data used in this secondary analysis included nominal, ordinal, and interval variables (see Appendices A and B). Both descriptive and inferential analytical techniques were used. Frequencies were used to reveal general trends in responses to questions on the survey. To prepare the data for analysis, it was necessary to use factor analysis for data reduction. The statistical analyses are based primarily on responses from 2107 undergraduate students, 1212 White (57.5%) and 895 Black (42.5%) students, although different sample sizes for the groups varied with each analysis performed (i.e. factor analysis and regression analysis), because listwise deletion was used to take into account missing data. Weighting techniques were not utilized in analyzing this dataset.

A series of factor analyses were performed to uncover underlying relationships between variables that best represent the constructs proposed in this study. The factor analyses employed the principal axis factoring method to extract the initial factors.

Multivariate regression analysis was performed on the chosen input and environment constructs (twenty-two independent variables) to determine their relationship to the outcome

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measure (two dependent variables). The forced entry regression analysis method was performed on the entire dataset first and then separately for each student group, i.e. White students and Black students, to determine any differences between the groups.

Results

Factor Analysis

Studies have shown that White and Black students differ in their views about diversity issues, thus the Cronbach's alpha estimates of internal consistency reliability for the factor scales obtained through factor analysis varied from group to group in the factor analyses (Antony, 1993; Constantini & King, 1985; Hynn, 1994; Springer, et al., 1996).

Factor Analysis - Dependent Variable

Factor analysis was performed on a group of nine variables concerned with attitudes and opinions about the role of racial minorities in American colleges and universities and the responsibility of those institutions for such groups() to determine any underlying relationships between the variables. Because the two factor scales were moderately correlated (r = 0.51), the oblique (OBLIMIN) rotation was used to obtain two common factors with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA value of 0.86, which indicates that a satisfactory simple structure is obtainable. In addition, the eigenvalues for the two factors were 3.47 and 1.07. Thus, two factor scales were extracted for the dependent variable and were named *Support issues of diversity* and *Oppose race-based policies*. Table 1 and Table 2 present the two (dependent variable) factor scales, the factor loadings of each survey item, their means and standard deviations, and the Cronbach's alpha values for each student group. The descriptions listed for each of the variables represent the exact wording of the items as they appeared on the survey.

Support issues of diversity contained three items (see Table 1 and Appendix A): hiring Black faculty should be a top priority, more minorities will strengthen colleges, and colleges should require courses on minority perspectives. The Cronbach's alpha values for All students, White students, and Black students were 0.77, 0.71, and 0.60, respectively.

Oppose race-based policies contained three items (see Table 2 and Appendix A): affirmative action has reduced standards of colleges; minorities are given advantages that discriminate against other students; and colleges are not responsible for racial justice. The Cronbach's alpha values for All students, White students, and Black students were 0.65, 0.62, and 0.54, respectively.

Factor Analysis - Independent Variables

Factor analysis reduced the number of independent variables employed in the regression analyses (see Table 3 and Appendix B). Five factor scales were derived from employing exploratory factor analysis to different sets of survey questions/variables.

The factor, *Involved on campus*, was generated from an orthogonal (VARIMAX) rotation and had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA value of 0.86 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, 0.80, and 0.82 for All, White, and Black students, respectively. It contained five items: participation in social activities, student organizations and residence hall activities, attendance at interracial parties, and studying with other students.

Three factor scales representing perceptions of institutional climate with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA value of 0.88 were generated from an oblique (OBLIMIN) rotation, because two of the factor scales were moderately correlated (r = 0.50).

Factor 1 was named *Perceived institutional support of Black issues* and had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85, 0.83, and 0.81 for All, White, and Black students, respectively. It contained eight items: Black events are funded, there is concern for Black issues on campus, the institution promotes racial understanding, there is open discussion of racial issues, faculty are sensitive to Black issues, activism by Black students on campus, and Black students and faculty have influence on campus.

Factor 2 was labeled *Perceived conflict between Black and White on campus* and had five items (Cronbach's alpha: All = 0.77, White = 0.78, Black = 0.72): racial conflict on campus, interracial tension in living arrangements, trust between students, racial separation, and trust between Black students and White faculty.

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The final factor of this scale dealt with *Perceived interaction between Black and White* and had only two key items (Cronbach's alpha: All = 0.68, White = 0.72, Black = 0.63): interaction between Black and White students, and Black participation in campus-wide events.

The fifth independent variable derived from factor analysis was named *Experience discrimination on campus* and was generated from an oblique (OBLIMIN) rotation. It had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA value of 0.78 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.59, 0.54, and 0.65 for All students, White students, and Black students, respectively. The three key items included: feel racial discrimination from students and the administration, and social life is confined to own race.

Regression Analysis

In predicting college student attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies, different patterns emerge for White and Black students (see Table 5 and Table 6). The models account for between 50% and 10% of the variance in the two dependent variables. Although the total regression for all students for both dependent variables indicates significant influences in attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies, the separate regressions for each of the racial groups is the focus of the results and discussion sections. Looking at the separate regressions allows for the examination of differences between White and Black students' attitudes based on the same personal characteristics and environmental features and prevents the masking of differences that would occur by reviewing only the results for all students. Unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients are provided for comparison across and within the two groups.

Regression Analysis - Dependent Variable: Support Issues of Diversity

Parent educational level was the only personal characteristic that showed a significant relationship with support of diversity issues for White students, and this relationship was positive. It was not a significant variable for Black students. This follows the idea of self-interest that says African Americans with higher levels of education will still support race-based issues (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993).

As we might expect, both White and Black students who have taken a Black studies course were supportive of diversity issues (Milem 1994; Springer, et al., 1995). Accordingly, White students who were members of organizations concerned with Black issues were more likely to support diversity; however, this was not a significant variable for Black students. An assumption made about the makeup of such organizations - most members are likely to be Black students - could offer some explanation, i.e., White student members would have the opportunity to interact more with students who are a different race, whereas Black student members would not. Therefore, cross-race interactions could influence students' attitudes toward diversity positively as found in previous studies (e.g., Astin, 1993).

For White students, if the race of the person from whom they were seeking help didn't matter, they were more likely to support issues of diversity. But the results show the opposite relationship for Black students. If Black students preferred to ask other Black individuals for help, they were more likely to support diversity issues. These results might suggest that the positive outcomes associated with interacting with diverse peers is not the same for Black and White students in this case.

Living on campus was positively associated with White students' support of diversity. Students who live on campus will have the opportunity to meet and live with students who are different from themselves, which could result in positive feelings toward others who are a different race (Allport, 1954). Having White friends in general had a negative relationship with support of diversity issues for White students. Thus, less contact or socializing with those who are a different race and the influence of peer groups could affect White students' attitudes toward diversity (Astin, 1993; Pascarella, et al., 1995). White students who felt discriminated against, i.e. reverse discrimination, were more likely not to support diversity issues, which supports previous research findings (e.g. Bobo & Kluegel, 1993).

Black students who are involved on campus tend to be more supportive of diversity issues, but this was not found to be a significant relationship for White students. Perhaps this is because the students who were surveyed attended predominantly White institutions, and being involved on campus would most likely mean being involved in activities where the majority of participants are

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White. Thus, Black students' involvement would equate to interacting more with students who are not of the same race, whereas for White students, the opposite is the case. This supports previous research on intergroup contact (Pascarella, et al., 1995; Pettigrew, 1986).

The more conflict perceived between Black and White individuals on campus, the more likely Black students supported issues of diversity; however, this was not true for White students. These results may further support the differences found between White and Black students with regard to the importance placed on interracial understanding (Antony, 1993).

The significant variables in this model accounted for 26% and 27% of the variance in the dependent variable, *support issues of diversity*, for White and Black students, respectively.

Regression Analysis - Dependent Variable: Oppose Race-Based Policies

The personal characteristics that were significant for White students included gender and parent educational level. White males and students whose parents had lower educational levels were more likely to oppose race-based policies. These were not significant variables for Black students. Again, self-interest may help explain the latter finding (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). The former supports similar findings in previous research investigating gender differences in racial attitudes (Springer, et al., 1995; Quaills, Cox, & Schehr, 1992).

Although Black students were more likely to support race-based policies than White students, Black students with lower GPAs were more likely to oppose them. Perhaps these students did not want to be considered as affirmative action admittees. Further, Black students who attended a predominantly White high school were more likely to oppose race-base policies. Although this was not a significant finding for White students, peer group influence could help account for these results (Astin, 1993).

Results suggest that students who have not taken a Black studies course were more likely to oppose race-based policies. This finding was significant for both White and Black students and supports past research (Milem, 1994; Springer, et al., 1995).

For White students, feeling discriminated against was the strongest predictor of opposition to race-based policies. These results are similar to those in previous studies on self-interest where

Whites did not support policies that would not benefit them or would impose a cost on them (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Constantini & King, 1985; Jacobson, 1985a).

Other significant variables for White students included membership in a group concerned with Black issues, and involvement on campus. Those who were not members of organizations concerned with Black issues or who were not involved on campus were more likely to oppose race-based policies. Intergroup contact and peer group interaction could explain the positive relationships in these findings (Astin, 1993; Allport, 1954).

In the case of asking for help, White students who preferred to ask other White individuals for help were more inclined to oppose race-based policies, whereas the opposite was true for Black students. Black students who preferred to ask other Black individuals for help were less likely to oppose race-based policies. Peer group influence could arguably affect both White and Black students' attitudes toward race-based policies.

The significant relationship found between students' perceptions of institutional support of Black issues and their attitude toward race-based policies appears to be a suppressor effect. The beta is not only significant, where the zero-correlation is not, but the beta also is larger than the zero-correlation coefficient. Upon further inspection of the suppressor effect, it appeared that a combination of several suppressor variables, each with a small effect is involved. No one variable contributes predominately to the overall suppression of the variable, *institution supports Black issues*. Still, the results pose an interesting relationship for both White and Black students. If they perceived that their institution supported Black issues, then they were more likely to oppose race-based policies. Perhaps students who perceive strong institutional support for Black issues may feel that their university is doing enough for Black students and therefore, feel that there is no need for race-based policies.

The significant variables in this model accounted for 24% and 10% of the variance in the dependent variable, *oppose race-based policies*, for White and Black students, respectively.

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Limitations

The results of this study may add to the body of literature describing college student attitudes toward diversity issues and race-based policies, but it has four major limitations: (1) lack of a measure of attitudes prior to matriculation, (2) use of cross-sectional data, (3) secondary data analyses, (4) exclusion of students of different races, and (5) exclusion of various types of institutions.

Attitudes Prior to Matriculation

Although this study used Astin's Input Environment Outcome (I-E-O) model, there were few questions that adequately addressed the input constructs. Student input data are needed to assess changes which can be attributed to environmental constructs. Future studies have the potential to reveal causal relationships if pretest measures of student attitudes are constructed and utilized.

Cross Sectional Data

In addition to not having a pretest measure, these results are from cross-sectional data. Therefore, it is not possible to determine which variable came first - the college experience (environmental variables) or the dependent variable - i.e., definitive statements about causation cannot be made (Astin, 1991). For example, although results showed that students who took a Black studies course were more supportive of diversity issues than those who did not, we cannot determine if the students who initially enrolled in a Black studies course did so because they were open to issues of diversity prior to coming to college, or if they supported diversity issues as a result of taking the Black studies course. Future research should include longitudinal studies, thus enabling researchers to tease out the cause and effect relationship of the college environment and dependent variable.

Secondary Data Analysis

As in most secondary analyses, this study had inherent limitations as a consequence of analyzing data that were gathered for purposes other than the ones proposed for this study. Although the survey that was used to gather the data had many excellent questions about diversity issues, the inclusion of several additional items would be useful in future research on student attitudes toward issues of diversity.

Surveys should define how diversity, race-based policies, affirmative action, and other ambiguous terms that are central to the purpose of the study are being used. Factor analysis of the dependent variable in this study showed that there are differences in the ways that Black and White students view diversity and race-based policies. Inclusion of definitions of key terms may provide a more accurate picture of how students view these concepts, and help to discover the reasons why, in this study, students who perceived institutional support of Black issues were more likely to oppose race-based policies.

Involvement questions should include measures of the extent, type, duration, frequency, motivation for, and racial makeup and purpose of the groups. This information would provide insight into how involvement and peer groups affect student attitudes.

Items which directly measure levels of prejudice and racism prior to matriculation and at a later time would help determine how the college environment shapes attitudes. Again, longitudinal studies would allow researchers to capture these relationships.

Not only should students' perceptions of institutional support of diversity be measured, but information on actual institutional programs, policies, and initiatives should be gathered. A more complete analysis of institutional support of diversity issues could be performed with this extra information.

Valuable information was gathered from the variables on discrimination in this study. However, additional questions concerning perceived discrimination against other racial groups would reveal student perceptions of the level of discrimination against groups other than one's own. This would help researchers interpret differences found in attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies.

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Including Students of Other Races/Ethnicities and Different Institutions

With the racial diversity on our campuses encompassing more than just Black and White students, it is imperative that we include all racial and ethnic groups in future research studies. Without the inclusion of all groups, we are unable to uncover the total effect that diversity has on college students. In addition to including all racial groups, future studies should include the various types, sizes, and classifications of universities in the United States. Regional and institutional differences may be uncovered with the addition of other institutions.

Discussion

Although a few personal characteristics were shown to influence student attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies, environmental features seemed to influence students' attitudes to a greater extent (Astin, 1993; Antony, 1993; Springer, et al., 1996). Also, differences between White and Black students' development of attitudes based on the same constructs were found (Sax & Arredondo, 1996; Springer, et al., 1995).

The personal characteristics that showed significant relationships with student attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies included parent educational level, gender, and attending a White high school. These results generally support findings in previous studies looking at self-interest and peer influence in racial attitude formation (Astin, 1993; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Pascarella, et al., 1991; Qualls, et al., 1992; Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985).

Several environmental constructs were found to have significant relationships with student attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies and could be explained by previous research on intergroup contact and interaction with diverse peers (Pascarella, et al., 1995; Astin, 1993; Pettigrew, 1986; Allport, 1954; Cook, 1984). Black students who were involved on campus, White students who were members of organizations concerned with Black issues, White students who lived on campus, and White students who did not have mostly White friends in general were found to be more supportive of diversity (Astin, 1993; Milem, 1994; Pascarella, et al., 1995; Springer, et al., 1995). Furthermore, White students who were not involved on campus were

found to oppose race-based policies. Therefore, institutions should provide a wide range of opportunities for diverse students to interact with one another, not only in the classroom, but outside as well. These interactions should be structured in such a way to promote greater understanding and respect among groups (Pascarella, et al., 1995). In addition, it is important to have a large enough number of different groups on campus in order for substantial intergroup contact to occur (Springer, et al., 1995).

A significant finding which has important curricular implications was that students who took a Black studies course were more supportive of diversity, whereas students who did not take a Black studies course were found to oppose race-based policies. Most importantly, these results were significant for *both* Black and White students. Courses on ethnic studies can give students the opportunity to have focused discussions on racial and ethnic issues and to interact with diverse peers, both of which have been shown to have positive outcomes on oneÕs openness to promote racial understanding (Milem, 1994; Springer, et al., 1995). For those advocating the inclusion of ethnic studies courses in the core curriculum, this finding provides evidence of the relationship between taking a Black issues course and attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies.

Black students' preference for their own race when seeking help did not negatively affect their support of diversity issues or attitudes toward race-based policies. This finding raises some interesting issues regarding the comfort level of Black students at predominantly White institutions. For example, some individuals may assume that Black students who "hang out" with other Black students are not open to interacting with students of a different race. These results, however, offer a different perspective. Preference when seeking help with personal issues from other races hint to differences in comfort levels experienced by Black students at predominantly White institutions. Accordingly, Black studentsÕ preference for oneÕs own race may not necessarily point to less openness to issues of diversity. Likewise, Black students who do not have a preference when seeking help may be happy with the race relations at their institution, and thus, do not perceive the need for diversity initiatives or race-based policies. In addition, when Black students perceived conflict between Blacks and Whites on campus, they were more supportive of diversity. This suggests that when Black students see the need for improvement, they support issues of diversity.

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When White students did not perceive any discrimination against them, they supported issues of diversity. However, when they felt they were discriminated against, i.e., they perceived reverse discrimination, they opposed race-based policies. Results also showed that Whites in general, and specifically White males, were more likely to oppose race-based policies. These findings follow the principle of self-interest and previous findings that the perception of discrimination affects the way that individuals view race-based policies (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Constantini & King, 1985).

Aversive attitudes toward race-based policies are spreading throughout the country. Results from this study may illustrate this notion further. It was found that *both* Black and White students who perceived their institutions as supporting Black issues were more likely to *oppose race-based policies*. These outcome measures may allude to the idea that students do not define diversity issues and race-based policies in the same way. Another explanation could be tied to the notions of issue framing, i.e., students may be more supportive of programs that they perceive as benefiting all students and not just certain groups of individuals (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Lipset & Schneider, 1978). Furthermore, students who perceive their institution as supportive of Black issues may believe that these efforts are enough to bring about equity and that there is no need for race-based policies at their institution.

Despite its limitations, this study should add to the understanding of which campus experiences encourage supportive attitudes toward diversity and race-based policies and those which influence opposing attitudes. Future studies could address the college experiences presented in this study as well as the differences found between racial groups. Another critical need is to examine students' understanding and definitions of diversity and race-based policies. Research in these areas will provide college administrators, policy makers, and faculty with further information needed to make decisions concerning diversity initiatives and how to implement race-based policies that will be supported.

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Table 1: Factor Loadings, Means, and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variable - Support Issues of Diversity

Dependent Variable *Support Issues of Diversity*	Factor Loading	All Students (N = 2020) Mean	Std. Dev.	White Students (N = 1091) Mean	Std. Dev.	Black Students (N = 799) Mean	Std. Dev.
Support Issues of Diversity[1] Alpha: All = .77, White = .71, Black = .60		8.39	2.49	7.11	2.08	10.31	1.73
The hiring of more Black faculty should be a top priority of this university	.64	2.69	.98	2.20	.85	3.37	.71
In the long run the greatly increased enrollment of racial minority students will strengthen colleges and universities	.53	2.97	.82	2.67	.80	3.37	.65
Colleges should have a course, required for graduation, that presents the perspectives of minorities in our society	.51	2.83	.95	2.49	.90	3.29	.81

Table 2: Factor Loadings, Means, and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variable - Oppose Race-Based Policies

Dependent Variable *Oppose Race-Based Policies*	Factor Loading	All Students (N = 2020) Mean	Std. Dev.	White Students (N = 1091) Mean	Std. Dev.	Black Students (N = 799) Mean	Std. Dev.
Oppose Race-based Policies[1] Alpha: All = .65, White = .62, Black = .54		6.19	1.91	6.90	1.80	5.25	1.66
Affirmative action for racial minorities, despite its underlying concern for equality, has helped reduce the academic standards of our colleges and universities	-.82	2.14	.80	2.35	.76	1.86	.78
Minority students are given advantages at this university that discriminate against other students	-.58	2.06	.82	2.36	.80	1.65	.65
Despite our concern over racial injustices, colleges and universities do not have a primary responsibility to correct that situation	-.47	2.01	.87	2.20	.83	1.77	.88

[1] All variables were rated on a four-point Likert scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

Table 3: Factor Loadings, Means, and Standard Deviations for Independent Variables

Independent Variables Derived from Factor Analysis		All Students		White Students		Black Students	
	Factor Loading	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Involved on campus[1]		14.28	4.97	13.96	4.87	14.50	5.07
Alpha: All = .81, White = .80, Black = .82							
Participated in social activities	.78	3.38	1.31	3.39	1.32	3.31	1.30
Participated in student clubs or organizations	.72	2.82	1.46	2.70	1.47	2.95	1.45
Participated in residence hall activities	.63	2.20	1.39	2.08	1.34	2.32	1.42
Attended interracial parties	.60	2.57	1.31	2.46	1.27	2.64	1.35
Studied with other students	.49	3.32	1.14	3.35	1.12	3.26	1.14
Perceived institutional support of Black issues[2]		21.15	5.27	22.92	4.64	18.70	5.10
Alpha: All = .85, White = .84, Black = .82							
Black events and orgs. are funded	.71	3.14	1.03	3.43	.93	2.72	1.02
Concern for Black issues on campus	.68	3.21	1.07	3.44	1.00	2.87	1.08
Efforts to promote racial understanding on campus	.67	2.88	1.10	3.19	1.01	2.45	1.08
Open discussion of racial issues	.67	3.16	1.08	3.34	1.02	2.89	1.09
Faculty are sensitive to issues impt. to Black students	.65	2.86	.95	3.17	.80	2.46	.98
Black students have influence on campus	.63	3.35	1.01	3.54	.92	3.06	1.05
Activism by Black groups on behalf of their own concerns	.54	3.60	1.00	3.65	1.01	3.51	.98
Black faculty/adm. have influence on campus	.46	2.56	1.01	2.76	.96	2.27	1.02
Perceived conflict between Black & White on campus[2]		14.18	3.73	13.34	3.62	15.42	3.53
Alpha: All = .77, White = .78, Black = .72							
Racial conflict on campus	.78	2.66	1.04	2.50	1.02	2.89	1.03
Interracial tension in living arrangement	.67	2.43	1.10	2.34	1.06	2.58	1.12
Trust between Black and White students	-.56	2.98	.95	3.14	.89	2.74	.98
Racial separation on campus	.55	3.12	1.13	2.91	1.14	3.40	1.07
Trust between Black students and White faculty	-.46	3.10	.92	3.35	.82	2.75	.94
Perceived interaction between Black & White[2]		6.26	1.68	6.60	1.64	5.80	1.62
Alpha: All = .68, White = .72, Black = .63							
Amount of interaction between Black & White stdts.	.74	3.18	.93	3.25	.92	3.09	.94
Black participation in all-campus events	.40	3.08	.99	3.36	.93	2.71	.96
Experience discrimination on campus[3]		7.60	2.61	6.95	2.39	8.62	2.76
Alpha: All = .59, White = .54, Black = .65							
Feel racial discrimination from students	.79	2.45	1.14	2.34	1.14	2.65	1.13
Feel racial discrimination from administration	.53	2.33	1.17	1.80	.99	3.07	1.04
Social life is confined to own race	.44	2.82	1.28	2.82	1.19	2.92	1.39

[1] All variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale: 5=very often, 4=often, 3=sometimes, 2=seldom, 1=never

[2] All variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale: 5=very substantial, 4=substantial, 3=some, 2=slight, 1=very little

[3] All variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

Table 4: Means, and Standard Deviations for Independent Variables

Independent Variables	All Students		White Students		Black Students	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Demographic Characteristics						
Female	1.60	0.49	1.55	.50	1.68	.47
Black	1.42	0.49	1.00	---	2.00	---
Age 17 to 24	20.21	1.61	20.39	1.60	20.03	1.64
Parent educational level[1]	4.17	1.32	4.21	1.26	4.00	1.32
Pre-college Background						
High school GPA (8=A or A+, 1=C- or less)	5.65	1.89	5.72	1.89	5.44	1.86
Grew up in a White neighborhood (5=all White, 1=non-White)	3.63	1.45	4.51	.76	2.43	1.30
Attended a White high school (5=all White, 1=non-White)	3.71	1.20	4.24	.83	2.98	1.23
College Ability Measures						
College GPA (8=A or A+, 1=C- or less)	4.51	1.87	5.06	1.78	3.72	1.70
Self-rated academic ability (3=highest/above avg., 1=below avg.)	2.47	.62	2.54	.59	2.37	.62
Relationships and Attitudes						
Others' race doesn't matter when asking for help[2]	1.80	0.27	1.87	0.23	1.69	0.29
Excellent relations w/ Black students[3]	3.86	0.95	3.73	.90	4.08	.96
Excellent relations w/ White students[3]	4.10	0.85	4.34	.61	3.77	.99
Have White friends on campus (5=all White, 1=non-White)	3.45	1.09	4.10	.68	2.58	.95
Have White friends in general (5=all White, 1=non-White)	3.41	1.17	4.18	.67	2.37	.91
Involvement						
Live on campus (2=on, 1=off)	1.51	.50	1.45	.50	1.57	.50
Diversity Activities						
Taken a Black studies course (2=yes, 1=no)	1.36	.48	1.24	.43	1.54	.50
Member of org. concerned w/ Black issues (2=yes, 1=no)	1.21	.41	1.06	.24	1.40	.49

[1]Average educational levels of father and mother: 7=J.D., M.D. or Ph.D., 6=Master's, 5=Bachelor's, 4=Some college, 3=High school graduate, 2=9-11 years, 1=1-8 years
[2]Composite of five questions asking if one prefers one's own race or it doesn't matter when asking for different types of help: 2=it doesn't matter, 1=own race
[3]All variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale: 5=excellent, 4=good, 3=no contact, 2=poor, 1=very poor

Table 5: OLS Regression Results for Dependent Variable - Support Issues of Diversity

Independent Variables	All Students (N=1235) b	·		White Students (N=795) b	·		Black Students (N=440) b	·	
Demographic Characteristics									
Gender	.066	.013		.185	.045		-.096	-.026	
Race	1.49	.290	***	---	---		---	---	
Age 17 to 24	-.154	-.023		-.039	-.007		-.131	-.027	
Parent educational level	.128	.065	**	.204	.121	***	-.051	-.038	
Pre-college Background									
High school GPA	-.002	-.001		.003	.002		-.032	-.033	
Grew up in a White neighborhood	-.063	-.036		.033	.012		-.075	-.059	
Attended a White high school	-.048	-.022		-.054	-.021		.022	.016	
College Ability Measures									
College GPA	.081	.061	*	.069	.059		.071	.067	
Self-rated academic ability	.111	.028		.101	.030		.105	.039	
Relationships and Attitudes									
Others' race doesn't matter when asking for help	.146	.082	***	.315	.185	***	-.258	-.220	***
Excellent relations w/ Black students	.223	.078	**	.029	.012		.339	.149	**
Excellent relations w/ White students	-.145	-.044		-.084	-.024		.035	.018	
Have White friends on campus	-.200	-.088	*	-.114	-.038		-.098	-.054	
Have White friends in general	-.254	-.120	**	-.325	-.105	*	.154	.082	
Involvement									
Live on campus	.279	.057	*	.499	.122	**	-.170	-.047	
Involved on campus	.036	.069	**	.022	.051		.050	.132	*
Perceived Institutional Climate									
Institution supports Black issues	-.020	-.047		-.011	-.027		-.022	-.068	
Conflict between Black and White on campus[1]	.056	.087	***	.037	.066		.055	.113	*
Interaction between Black and White on campus	-.015	-.010		.0002	.0002		-.030	-.028	
Feel discriminated against	-.035	-.038		-.073	-.085	*	.048	.080	
Diversity Activities									
Taken a Black studies course	.801	.154	***	.891	.180	***	.762	.215	***
Member of group concerned with Black issues	.613	.100	***	1.590	.199	***	.030	.008	
Adjusted R square	.50			.26			.27		

*p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[1] Variables with negative factor loadings were reversed-coded

Table 6: OLS Regression Results for Dependent Variable - Oppose Race-Based Policies

Independent Variables	All Students (N=1441) b	·	White Students (N=901) b	·	Black Students (N=540) b	·
Demographic Characteristics						
Female	-.245	-.063 **	-.280	-.078 **	-.067	-.019
Black	-.799	-.200 ***	---	---	---	---
Age 17 to 24	.005	.001	-.185	-.037	.373	.087
Parent educational level	-.100	-.066 **	-.118	-.082 *	-.087	-.070
Pre-college Background						
High school GPA	.030	.028	.020	.020	.051	.058
Grew up in a White neighborhood	-.064	-.046	-.098	-.041	-.040	-.033
Attended a White high school	.118	.071 *	.084	.039	.127	.097 *
College Ability Measures						
College GPA	-.056	-.053	-.029	-.028	-.098	-.100 *
Self-rated academic ability	.034	.011	.092	.031	.001	.0004
Relationships and Attitudes						
Others' race doesn't matter when asking for help	-.088	-.062 *	-.273	-.178 ***	.148	.134 *
Excellent relations w/ Black students	-.154	-.067 **	-.028	-.013	.023	.011
Excellent relations w/ White students	.234	.091 ***	.148	.048	-.026	-.014
Have White friends on campus	.204	.114 **	.014	.005	.215	.125
Have White friends in general	.142	.086	.081	.030	-.067	-.038
Involvement						
Live on campus	-.025	-.006	-.069	-.019	-.053	-.016
Involved on campus	-.032	-.079 **	-.033	-.090 *	-.008	-.022
Perceived Institutional Climate						
Institution supports Black issues[1]	.051	.150 ***	.038	.111 ***	.046	.153 **
Conflict between Black and White on campus[2]	.006	.015	.021	.043	-.011	-.024
Interaction between Black and White on campus	-.037	-.032	.002	.002	-.100	-.099
Feel discriminated against	.132	.182 ***	.229	.302 ***	-.024	-.041
Diversity Activities						
Taken a Black studies course	-.492	-.121 ***	-.454	-.105 ***	-.436	-.133 **
Member of group concerned with Black issues	-.443	-.093 ***	-.903	-.131 ***	-.182	-.056
Adjusted R square	.30		.24		.10	

*p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

[1] The beta is significant although the zero-correlation was not. This indicates that one or more variables is acting as a suppressor in the multiple regression.

[2] Variables with negative factor loadings were reversed-coded